

September 20, 2020

Dear Judge Rakoff,

My name is Natalia Lewis, and Martin Lewis is my father. I'm 24 now, and he went to jail when I was 5. It might seem strange but even from prison he has been the most present parent in my life. To be able to have my father back and for him to be able to be in his daughters and grandson's life would mean the world to us.

I am currently living in Charlotte, North Carolina with my boyfriend Russell. We moved here from Oregon for his job and rent a house in a small neighborhood. We have been living here since March. I'm currently working a new job doing inventory and stocking at a craft store. I enjoy my job; I get to work on my own and when the store is closed. I spent my time caring for our two pet cats and handling most of the chores when not working. In my free time I like to crochet and garden, before covid-19 took hold I liked taking a walk to my local library branch and reading their latest comics.

My boyfriend and I have been living together for two years now and have been together for six years. Before living with my boyfriend, I lived with my sister Tilly in Oregon. Tilly still lives there with her son, so I don't get to visit often but we do keep in contact. My only brothers on my fathers' side have passed a few years ago while I was in high school, from suicide and cancer/chemo.

My time living with my dad when I was young was spent in Brooklyn, New York. My father, sister and I lived in a second story of an apartment building. My sister and I shared a bedroom and my dad had his own, but most nights we would all fall asleep on the couches after watching tv together. In winter my father would take us out to play in the snow and make snowmen. When we were done, we would walk a few blocks to see other people's snowmen. At some point my father let my sister pick out a kitten from a litter his friend had, a boy named Skittles. That next Christmas my mother gifted me a kitten, a girl I named Nala. We always had cats in the apartment from then on. We did almost everything together as a family, my father, sister and me.

Since my father has been in prison we have communicated by telephone. He would call once week and talk to the both of us after he spoke with our adoptive mother. The first few years was

normal but after some time our adoptive mother would make us keep things from our father. I started writing letters to my father instead and was able to call him again when I got my own phone. We still spoke weekly, I made sure not to miss his calls. I kept him updated on my life events with pictures and letters outside of the phone calls. I was able to visit my father for the first time in many years when my boyfriend offered to drive me the 4 hours to see him. Shortly before I left home, we started talking more frequently from two to three times a day to every other day, now we talk everyday sometime twice a day on top of emails. Over the years we have gotten closer, my father has supported me with every decision I've made and chance I've taken. Once I moved to Oregon my father transferred there as well. I was able to visit him often and he got to see my sister for the first time in over ten years as well as meet his very first grandchild for the first time.

If my father is released, he would live with my boyfriend and I in our home. We rent a house in a nice neighborhood with plenty of room. We could do all the distancing for COVID until he finished quarantine. I'm sure my father would keep busy with his daily workouts and helping around with chores. I joke with my father that I'll teach him how to use all the tech that we now use daily. I would be able to take him to doctor and dentist appointments. I'm sure my father would like to look for work where he can get it. It would mean a lot to me to have a loving parent physically in my life for what seems like the first time ever. The amount of love and support he's given me over the phone all these years has gotten me where I am now. No one has been able to get close to the amount of effort my father has put into being a parent and caring for me, all while hundreds of miles away most of the time. To have him in my now would be lifechanging for both of us.

Natalia Lewis